



*Office of the United States Attorney  
District of Arizona*

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## **MEXICAN POLICE OFFICER ADMITS TO CONSPIRACY TO ILLEGALLY EXPORT FIREARMS TO MEXICO**

PHOENIX, Ariz. – Pedro Rios-Perez, age 42, a Police Officer for the State of Baja, California, Mexico, pled guilty today to the felony offenses of Conspiracy and Alien in Possession of Firearms, in federal district court in Phoenix, before Magistrate Judge Earl C. Voss.

U.S. Attorney Paul K. Charlton said, "This case illustrates that public corruption touches officials on both sides of the line. These cases remain a priority for our office."

Rios-Perez was arrested in California on January 7, 2006, and subsequently charged with the two offenses by Indictment in Arizona. In the course of his guilty plea today, Rios-Perez, a non-resident alien and citizen of Mexico, admitted that on January 7, 2006, he and co-conspirator traveled to a gun show in Yuma, Arizona, and purchased an Olympic Arms, .223 caliber, semi-automatic rifle, two Smith and Wesson, 9 mm, semi-automatic pistols, and ammunition. The two conspirators then hid ammunition and three firearms in a truck in Yuma for illegal exportation to Mexico through the Andrade, California, Port of Entry. The ammunition and handguns were hidden in the truck's air filter and the rifle was hidden behind the truck's front seat. The vehicle was assigned to Rios-Perez by his employer, a Mexican law enforcement agency. Prior to attempting to crossing the border, Rios-Perez covered up his vehicle's official markings with an opaque material and tape. The two conspirators then traveled from Yuma to the Andrade Port of Entry, for the purpose of illegally exporting the ammunition and three firearms to Mexico. The firearms and ammunition were found in the vehicle by federal law enforcement officials as the two attempted to leave the United States and cross into Mexico at the international border. At the time Rios-Perez possessed the firearms, he was an alien in the United States who did not have legal authorization to receive or possess the weapons.

A conviction for Conspiracy carries a maximum penalty of five (5) years in prison, a conviction for Alien in Possession of Firearms carries a maximum penalty of ten (10) years in prison. A fine of up to \$250,000 may also be imposed for each offense. In determining an actual sentence, the sentencing judge, Judge Earl H. Carroll, will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence. Sentencing is set before Judge Carroll on Monday, August 28, 2006, at 1:30 p.m.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Bureau of Customs, and Border Protection, and Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The prosecution is being handled by Frederick A. Battista, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix, Ariz.

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